Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Radio Service
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Wednesday, June 1, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "TIPS FOR FOOD SHOPPERS." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture and the Consumers' Counsel, Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

--ooOoo--

For the lady who goes a-marketing, here are more tips on prices and supplies of seasonal foods.

Fruits and vegetables are ripening a couple of weeks earlier than usual this year. So the markets have been offering more asparagus than a year ago and more snap beans, cabbage, carrots, eggplant, strawberries and watermelon. But the supplies of cantaloup, celery, cucumbers, green peas and spinach have been somewhat smaller than last year at the same time. As for new potatoes, onions, and green peppers, they have been about the same.

Late May or early June is usually the time when strawberries are lowest in price and when supplies are heaviest. Trucks usually carry the big bulk of these peak-season berries to market. States shipping strawberries in June are expecting to have considerably more to ship this year than last. The Louisiana berry season was over about the middle of May. Tennessee, Virginia and Kentucky have been shipping berries since then.

The first Georgia peaches appeared in the markets in early May. And you'll be seeing more and more peaches from Georgia on the market until they hit their peak in July. Georgia is practically the only source of peaches until July. The southern States produce most of the fresh peach varieties while the bulk of the peaches for canning and drying grow in California. The peach crop of the 10 southern States will probably be a third larger this year than a year ago and prices will be considerably lower than last year's high peach prices. But in California the peach crop may be smaller than last year.

From peaches let's turn to potatoes. The new-potato crop is maturing earlier than usual and shipments have been heavier than at this time in 1937. Prices usually move down until early June. The States that ship new potatoes at this time of year have about the same number as last and prices will probably continue lower than last year's. The remaining stocks of old potatoes are about used up.

May and June are the months when the first watermelons find their way to market. These come from Florida and California. Florida melons first went to market the middle of May this year and the California shipments started only last week. Both Florida and California have a tenth more watermelons to sell this year than last. But the leading watermelon State is Georgia and the first shipments of Georgia melons are expected about June 10. The heaviest shipments will come in July.

May and June cantaloups come mostly from California where a crop about a quarter smaller than last year is expected. Shipments to date have been relatively light and melons have been small. The larger melons and heavier shipments will be coming in any day now. But don't look for the lowest prices on cantaloups until August.

Speaking of fruit from Florida and California, the Florida orange season is about over and California will be practically the only State shipping oranges from now on. The Valencia or summer orange crop in California is almost 60 percent larger than last year's crop which was damaged by a freeze, as perhaps you remember. The seasonal price advance on oranges which you can usually expect in October probably will be smaller this year than usual because of the large crop. Retail prices have been about a third under a year ago.

Apple and Florida grapefruit seasons are drawing to a close, too. Relatively large apple supplies are still on hand to be marketed before the new apple crop ripens this summer so prices aren't likely to change much from their present low levels. The Texas grapefruit shipping season has ended and Florida is the major source of supply at present.

So much for fruits. Now a few tips on corn and tomatoes and lettuce. Green corn shipments are rather small. Supplies have been coming in from Texas and Florida. But supplies are increasing and will probably be heaviest in July, August and September. As for tomatoes, relatively large shipments for this time of year have been coming in. And spring lettuce from California is just about at its peak.

Finally, a few notes on eggs and butter. Egg production has dropped below its 1937 level for the first time this year. And probably for the rest of the year, we will have fewer eggs -- fewer eggs and higher prices until November and December. But the prices won't go up noticeably probably until after this month.

Butter prices usually come down in June. And this year the prices will probably be lower than a year ago or the year before that. Also, more butter will probably be produced all during the coming summer than was produced last summer.

That's all the food tips I have for the time being. But in a fortnight I'll be back with more.

Now there's just time to answer a question from the lady who does not go marketing for fruits and vegetables but raises her own on her farm. To this lady I am sending Farmers' Bulletin No. 1673 called "The Farm Garden." Here's a good little volume to help you raise better vegetables.

Anyone is welcome to a copy while the supply lasts. To get it, just write the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C. for Bulletin 1673 called "The Farm Garden."

# # # #